

City of Socorro

Historic Walking Tour



Main Streets
&
Back Roads



Welcome to Socorro's Walking Tour

The walking tour has been divided into three historic districts. Look at the MAP on page 19 to guide you. The map, also, shows additional historical spots in Socorro.

If you like to walk and have the time, there is an interesting variety of places and things to see in each district. You may also drive.

The Plaza is a good focal point for each district, so the tour begins at the Plaza.

Kittrel Park is believed to have been an empty Army field in the 1850's. It was south of the original Plaza, but by the 1880's the park became known as "The Plaza." Kittrel Park was once enclosed by a picket fence, planted with trees, and had a small bandstand on it. Dr. L. W. Kittrel, a Socorro dentist and postmaster, worked to maintain the park during the end of the nineteenth century. It is believed that when Dr. Kittrel passed away in 1916, he was buried under the park, and the park was named after him.

The current Plaza encompasses *Kittrel Park*, a pleasant grassy area with trees, walkways, metal and other seating areas, and gazebo and the *Elfego Baca Heritage Park*, the treed and renovated block north of Kittrel Park, which displays the tiles of history and children's art and the bronze sculpture called the Wheel of History that shows a pictorial history of over four hundred years in Socorro.

Both parks have artistic metal sculpture signs (see top of page) that display past and present attractions for Socorro and the surrounding areas.

The Plaza remains a popular place for community events.



San Miguel



Church District

San Miguel Church was completed in 1821 and the community was built around it. The original dwellings and other structures were traditional Pueblo/Spanish New Mexico style architecture, with thick adobe (sun-dried brick) walls, flat roofs and mud floors, with few & small windows, and short doors. Small openings provided security from Indian attacks. Most of

the houses were built close together and close to the street, eliminating front yards. The streets were narrow, rambling, and irregular.



Socorro adobe brick yard, early 20th century

Stacked adobes from the Garcia House courtyard



(1a) East of Elfego Baca Heritage Park is the Juan Nepomuceno Garcia House. It is New Mexican territorial style architecture and represents one type of Spanish adobe dwellings,



with rooms built around a courtyard (*placita*). The enclosed courtyard style offered space for fruit trees, privacy, protection, animals,

and sometimes, even a well. The adobe walls of this house are about 20 inches thick.

(2a) Looking to the north, is the Juan José Baca House, built around 1870. Juan José Baca was the grandson of one of the original Socorro settlers. As was common at that time, the family operated a business in their home. The two-story end of the dwelling was used for a general merchandise store. Mr. Baca was also a rancher and a politician. The walls of the house are 18 inches thick and it has a courtyard. Note the elaborate balcony.



(3a) Turning right and traveling east towards California St., you will find the Garcia Opera House, one of Socorro's grand historic landmarks. Francesca Garcia, widow of Juan Nepomuceno Garcia, built the opera house and dedicated it in his memory. Construction was begun in 1884 and completed in 1887. The adobe walls are 34 inches thick and are curved to add strength and acoustics to the building. The inside 40-foot wide space has an open-trussed roof system. The flooring is made of hardwood. *See next page.*



(3a *continued*) The stage takes up one third of the building. It is a "raked" stage, which is slanted to give the audience a better view. The slant is one foot higher from rear to front. The proscenium arch curves to both sides of the stage, is supported by fluted columns, and the panels are decorated with a blue and gold design.

There are no records of an opera ever performing in the Garcia Opera House, but it was used for many community events. There were dances, masquerade balls, musical and theatrical productions, political rallies, marriages, Christmas parties, commencement exercises, and even basketball games.

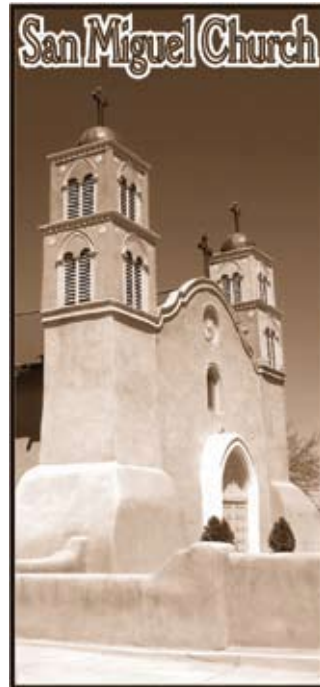
Socorro road race past the Garcia Opera House (circa 1930)



(5a) Anastacio Sedillo House at 114 Baca Street is estimated to be about 161 years old. The house was built in an L-shaped adobe Territorial design that reflects Socorro's past. The added Victorian details show the architectural changes that came to Socorro with the railroad.



(6a) Jacabo Sedillo House at 348 Bernard was built between 1902 and 1913. The Sedillo family built the house with adobe, even though other types of architecture and materials had become popular in other parts of Socorro. View the unique details of the porch and roof dormers.



(7a) In 1598, the Piro Indian pueblo of Pilabo offered assistance to the colonists of the Don Juan de Oñate expedition as they traveled through. In his documents, Oñate attributed the name "*Socorro*" (help) to the pueblo for their kindness and generous gift of corn.

Two Franciscan priests who were traveling with Oñate stayed behind with the Indians to do missionary work. Father Benavidez named the village "*Nuestra Señora de Perpetuo Socorro*" (Our Lady of Perpetual Help).

The mission was built between 1615 and 1626. The massive adobe walls are about five feet thick. The *vigas* (beams) were hand carved in wood that had been hauled down from the

mountains miles away from Socorro.

During the Pueblo uprising of 1680, the Piros and Spanish fled south. It wasn't until 1816, that a small group of Spaniards resettled Socorro and rebuilt the church.

There are 4 sub floors under the church. Records show that four priests & General Manuel Armijo, the last governor of the Territory of New Mexico, are buried under the church.

Some descendants of the early settlers say that in the early 1800's, an Apache Indian raid was halted when they saw a man with wings and shining sword hovering over the church door. Shortly afterward, a petition was made to the Bishop to change the name of the church to San Miguel (St. Michael), the Angelic Protector of the people.



(8a) The Lupe Torres House, 347 Bernard, was originally two dwellings built around 1898. They were later joined together and during renovations, an *Emborregado* style of plastering was applied to the house. It is a special technique that smooths

the squared corners and gives the panels a "wooly" looking texture. *Emborregado* means "en-sheeped."



(9a) The Zingerle House on the corner of Bernard & Mt. Carmel was built by Manuel Abeyta in 1871. He was a Socorro businessman, whose family was among the first Socorro settlers. The house is a one and half

story adobe, with a gabled roof. It was built in an L-shaped linear design, sitting close to the street. After the 1880's, a brick facing was added to the north and east adobe walls.

(10a) Turn on Mt. Carmel to view the Delfine Zimmerly House. It shows a style of adding rooms in a linear pattern as they were needed for growth. Entry to the additional rooms was created by cutting through the walls. The new rooms were entered by walking through the preceding rooms or through exterior doorways. The house was built in 1882-83. It shows a transition from flat-roofed adobe to pitched roof.



(11a) 210 School of Mines Road is the A. B. Baca House. It was built in 1910 and was the first house to show the use of the *Emborregado* style of plastering in Socorro. The house is a rectangular shaped adobe with a pitched roof and four gable wall dormers.



Other Areas of Interest in the San Miguel Church District:



* History tiles about School of Mines Rd. and more children's art tiles.

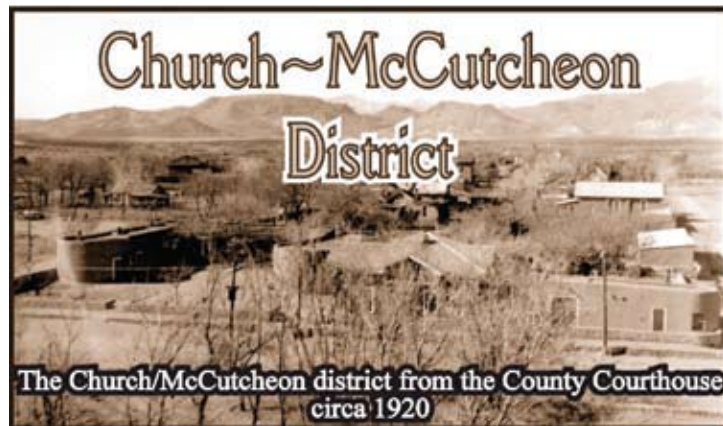
* The Edward S. Stapleton, Sr. House is at 313 Mt. Carmel Road. It is a nicely

maintained U-shaped house, with simplified Queen Anne style bays at each end. Underneath the eaves, there are arched, louvered vents.



* 321 Mt. Carmel Rd. is the Vivian Stapleton House, an L-shaped adobe

built in Territorial and Eastern designs, with a veranda, Queen Anne details, wood lintels, and pitched metal roof. Mr. Stapleton was the butcher in the family owned business.



Socorro started to grow in population, business, and prosperity in 1880 when the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway came to town. The silver mines were prospering and the Indian hostilities were ending.

New people came from different backgrounds and places. Many of the new merchants built homes in the area southwest of the Plaza. The homes mostly represented the Victorian era of architecture, using brick, stone, and wood, with Queen Anne details in trim.

The houses were set back from the street, with front, side, and back yards. Low picket and stone fences and hedges were often used to define the front property borders. The area includes one-story Bungalow style houses, 19th century high fashion two-story houses, and other intriguing designs.

(1b) The Chambon House, 324 Church Street, was built in the Eastlake architectural style, which is known for geometrical, angular shapes, with notched and carved design work. It was built in 1888 by William Watson, who also built the neighboring Bursum House, which is similar, but more elaborate. In 1921 and later, additions were made to this house.



(2b) The Bursum House, 326 Church Street, was built for Candelario Garcia in 1887 by the Socorro builder, William Watson. It was later the home of Holm O. Bursum, one of Socorro's longest serving mayors. Both men



were prominent territorial political leaders. The house is an excellent example of ornate Eastlake architecture, which is rare in New Mexico. It is a rectangular shaped brick two-story, with elaborate & ornate detailing. The roof gables have detailed insets and the Veranda porch is decorated with turned posts and banisters and Victorian design.



(3b) Since 1898, the house at 303 Eaton Ave. has been a combination of 2 distinct architectural styles. The northern end is a linear, Spanish colonial design. The

southern part has a square central hall plan and hipped roof, with a Victorian roof cresting made with metal poles and wire mesh and topped with iron fleur-de-lis ornamentation. The porch has wooden posts with cut channels & scroll brackets.

(4b) The Eaton House at 403 Eaton Avenue is a pre-1898 adobe house in a linear style, with an imposing front facade and small Spanish Pueblo Revival style porch. After the 1906



earthquake, the owner, Col. Ethan W. Eaton devised an earthquake protection plan. He installed one inch rods through the thick adobe walls and through exterior vertical boards. The rods were secured with bolts on the inside of the walls and star shaped washers on the outside boards. Mr. Eaton was a leader of a vigilante group from 1881-1884, and was elected Mayor in 1885.



(5b) Turn east to 327 McCutcheon Avenue. The Cortesy House was built in 1881 by Anthony Cortesy, a Switzerland native and Socorro businessman. The two story Queen Anne style brick house is the largest on the block and is similar in style to the Casa de Flecha on Park Street. Note the stone lintels and sills.

(6b) The house at 315 McCutcheon Avenue was built sometime between 1913 and 1930. It is a one and half story Bungalow style house constructed mostly of stone. The stone front of the house is coursed rubble, similar to the short wall along the front yard. The square columns at the front entrance are characteristic Bungalow style. The house was designed by the chief engineer of the Kelly Mine. His engineering skills were applied to true and straight angles and lines and to solar gain and temperature control by calculated window placement on the south front of the house and a single window on the north back side.



Eaton Darr House (left) & Fitch House (right)

(7b) The Eaton/Darr House, 313 McCutcheon, was built around 1893. It features fancy fretwork on the east gable and a bracketed porch.

(8b) The Fitch House at 311 McCutcheon is a one-story, gabled, brick structure that was built in 1888. The porch has wooden Corinthian columns. It was the first house in Socorro to have a water closet, and the novelty and newness attracted visitors for an opportunity to pull the chain and make a flush. James Fitch came to the territory in 1882. He was a lawyer, active in mining and banking, and a trustee at NM School of Mines, now called NM Institute of Mining and Technology.

(9b) The Captain Cooney House, which was built around the 1880's, has been relatively unaltered. It is a one-story, brick house with a gable roof, bracketed entry porch, arched windows, and a three-sided bay window facing the street. Captain Cooney was a military man who sought success in mining & civil service.



(10b) Turning right to 405 Park Street, you will find an unusual turn-of-the-century Bungalow style house. It was built between 1902 and 1903 with interlocking concrete blocks that were mechanically constructed to fit together.

(11b) The Abeytia y Armijo House, 407 Park Street, known as the Casa de Flecha, was built in 1885. It is Socorro's most impressive Boom-era residence, due to its size & detailing. It is a massive two-story Queen Anne style brick house with an ornamental three-story tower, topped by an arrow-shaped weathervane, hence its name *Casa de la Flecha*, or House of the Arrow.





Park Street early 1930's. Casa de Flecha can be seen (upper right) and the County Courthouse (not shown) is across the street. Even main streets of the day were unpaved. The sidewalks in this area were constructed by the WPA (Work Projects Administration) during the Great Depression.



(12b) Turning back north to the Plaza, you will see an old school on your right. The building is still used for the gym, community events, groups, dance, & art festivities. *circa 1940*



(13b) El Torreon (below) is located on Park Street to your left. The U-shaped building is an adobe that dates back to the early 1800's. The circular rooms on each end were added during renovations by the historic Socorro area photographer Joseph E. Smith. The house is named after the rounded rooms, as they are much like the old round Torreon towers that were used by the Spaniards for defense.

(photograph circa 1930)



(14b) The Park Street House next to the El Torreon was a square block house purchased by J. E. Smith for his mother from Massachusetts. An adobe addition was added and by 1909 the house was shingled in Queen Anne style to remind his mother of New England and make her feel more at home in Socorro. *(Photograph circa 1900)*



(15b) The Socorro County Courthouse is a Spanish/Pueblo Revival style building that was constructed in 1940. It has projecting vigas and wood lintels. *Photo circa 1940.*



The original courthouse, built in 1884, was High Victorian architecture with an octagonal shaped jailhouse behind. It was damaged by an earthquake in 1906. This photo was taken during a rare late April snowstorm in 1907.



Stylish Socorro motorists on Park Street.

Cows strolling across the street from the courthouse.

Mine entrance above Socorro, with the Billing Smelter in the upper mid-right. The dark line along the top of the photo is the Rio Grande valley & Socorro 2-3 miles away. *Photo date probably around 1900.*





View of Kittrel Park & businesses - circa 1930.

Note San Miguel Church in the upper right and the Crabtree & Fitch buildings in the upper left.

Isidro Baca Park (Veterans Memorial & Park) now fills the open space showing in right foreground of photograph.



Manzanara Ave. from Kittrel Park looking east towards the train station, between 1890 & 1900.

Kittrel Park, known as "The Plaza," was the center for social and political events, religious parades, and commerce. The businesses of Socorro grew around the Plaza and eastward down Manzanara Avenue towards the Santa Fe Railway Depot.

(1c) The Fitch Building (right, below) was built by Crabtree for James Fitch in 1914. It is one of the state's earliest steel reinforced concrete buildings, the first of its kind in Socorro, and possibly the only remaining one. Note the facade of recessed panels and raised columns.



(2c) The Crabtree Building (left, above) is at 211 Fisher Avenue. The original iron structure of this building was hauled down from the smelter that had operated on the mesa west of town. The building housed a blacksmith shop and then a hardware store for many years.



(3c) The City Water Commission, 217 Fisher Avenue, now houses the Socorro Heritage and Visitors Center. It was built between 1913 and 1930 for the offices of the City Water Commission and was later used for the

Police Department. It is the only commercial structure in the Plaza area that was built of coursed, ashlar stones.

(4c) The Church of the Epiphany, at 219 Fisher Avenue, was built between 1886 and 1898. It is an adobe building in a simplified Gothic Revival style. It has a steep, gable roof and the windows and entrance have pointed Gothic style lancet arches.



(5c) Jesus Maria Torres House, 225 Fisher Avenue, is a square adobe house with a hipped roof of corrugated metal. It was built after 1913. It has been said that the trim,



windows, and doors were purchased by mail-order through Crabtree Lumber Company. The turned columns on the front porch, which are unlike any others in Socorro, are the historical highlight for this house.

(6c) Across the street is the Fire Station. The Socorro Volunteer Fire Department



1930's



was established in 1887 and the original Socorro Hose Company was built on this spot in 1907. Fire and rescue services are now city operated.

The La France fire truck, photographed in the late 1930's, is now owned by a local citizen and is seen in parades on special occasions.

(7c) The Fortune Property is the oldest structure in existence on the southern side of the Plaza. Others were destroyed by fire. Patrick and Theresa Fortune were originally from Ireland. Mr. Fortune was stationed in New Mexico while in the military in the 1850's, and like many others, decided to stay.



only drinking establishment still in existence from the mining Boom era. It has brick coping and large arched windows. Giovanni Biavaschi, a native of Italy, built the business and sold wine made from his own vineyard. Socorro was once a bountiful grape growing and wine making area.

(9c) On the corner of Plaza and Manzanaras Ave. is the Abeytia Block. The two story brick building was built in 1880. It housed the Hilton Drugstore and the Masonic Lodge. The drugstore was founded in the late 1890's by a relative of Conrad Hilton, and is known as having been the oldest operating drugstore in the state. In the 1930's, the building was remodeled with a California Mission Revival style, and the first floor lost its arched windows. The drugstore corner is now the Socorro County Chamber of Commerce.



present

(10c) The Torres Block was the mercantile block in 1886. It was built between 1881 and 1886, and was once several different businesses in separate one and two-story, flat roofed, brick-faced buildings. The businesses sold a variety of items from hardware to groceries. The separate buildings have now been joined together and the brick-faced adobe has been stuccoed over.

(11c) Traveling east on Manzanaras Avenue and crossing California Street will bring you to the First State Bank. The bank has an extensive collection and display of historic photographs from Socorro and surrounding areas. A tour can be arranged by making an appointment (575) 835-1550.



(12c) Next to the bank is the Loma Cinema. It has been renovated through the years, but remains an historical link to Socorro's Boom period of business growth. It once housed the Price/Lowenstein Mercantile.



(13c) Across the street is the Knights of Pythias Hall. The two-story brick building was built in the 1880's. A metal cornice separates the first and second floors and there are pressed metal hood moldings on the second story windows. A metal bracketed cornice crowns the front. The building appears unaltered, but old photographs show it once was topped with a fancy pointed parapet. Note the still visible lettering on the walls, with K of P Hall and Owl Cigar 5¢.



(14c) The brick building next door, built between 1881 and 1886, is mostly unchanged. It shows the commercial store front use of large windows and doors, framed in wood, that was popular during Socorro's Boom era and made possible by the railway services.





(15c) 124 Manzanares appears to be one building, but once was individual structures. From 1886 until about 1913, there were two structures with pitched roofs, false fronts, and wooden trim. A third building was added

sometime between 1913 and 1930 using concrete and brick.



(16c) The Val Verde Hotel was constructed in 1919 of yellow concrete brick in Spanish Mission Revival style. The beautiful U-shaped building, with courtyard, was a hotel for tourists and gathering place for the community. After the hotel closed, the structure housed fine dining, a drinking establishment, apartments, book stores, hair salons, coffee houses, and other businesses through the years.

Beyond the Plaza Areas of Historic Interest

■ The Smith House at 603 Central Avenue was the first home owned by the J. E. Smith family. It is now the home for the J. E. Smith Museum, displaying his glass plate work and historic photography collection. (ph 575-835-0648 for appointment)



▲ The Hilton House is located at 601 Park Street. August H. Hilton, the father of the famous hotel owner, Conrad Hilton, built the house in 1912. It is a one and half story California Bungalow style house made of cast concrete blocks. The gabled roof slopes down to cover the front porch and has a shed dormer above. The low wall in front of the porch is also constructed with the interlocking cast blocks.

★ The Crown Mill, a three-story brick mill, was built in 1892 by John Greenwald. The height of the mill allowed for the gravity processing method of milling. The mill processed wheat from the farms along the Rio Grande and imported wheat from Kansas to mill. Crown Mill flour was shipped all over the United States, but the majority was used in New Mexico and Arizona.

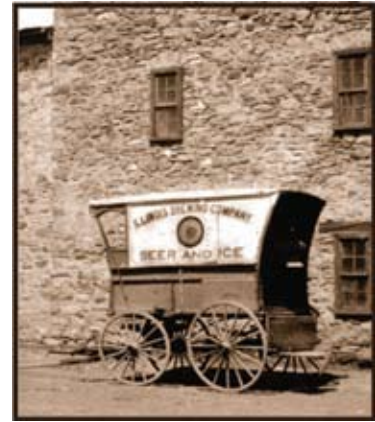
There were times when the mill operated both day and night to satisfy the high demand for flour.



● The Hammel Museum is located at 600 Sixth Street. Jacob Hammel immigrated to the United States from Germany in 1848 and started the Illinois Brewery in Lebanon, Illinois. Two of his sons, William and Gustav, came to Socorro in the 1880's and started a beer garden, started brewing beer, then added an ice plant and soft drink bottling. In 1887, dad had joined them and the business name was changed from Hammel Bros. & Co.

to Illinois Brewing Company. During the prohibition years, they were able to stay open selling soda and ice.

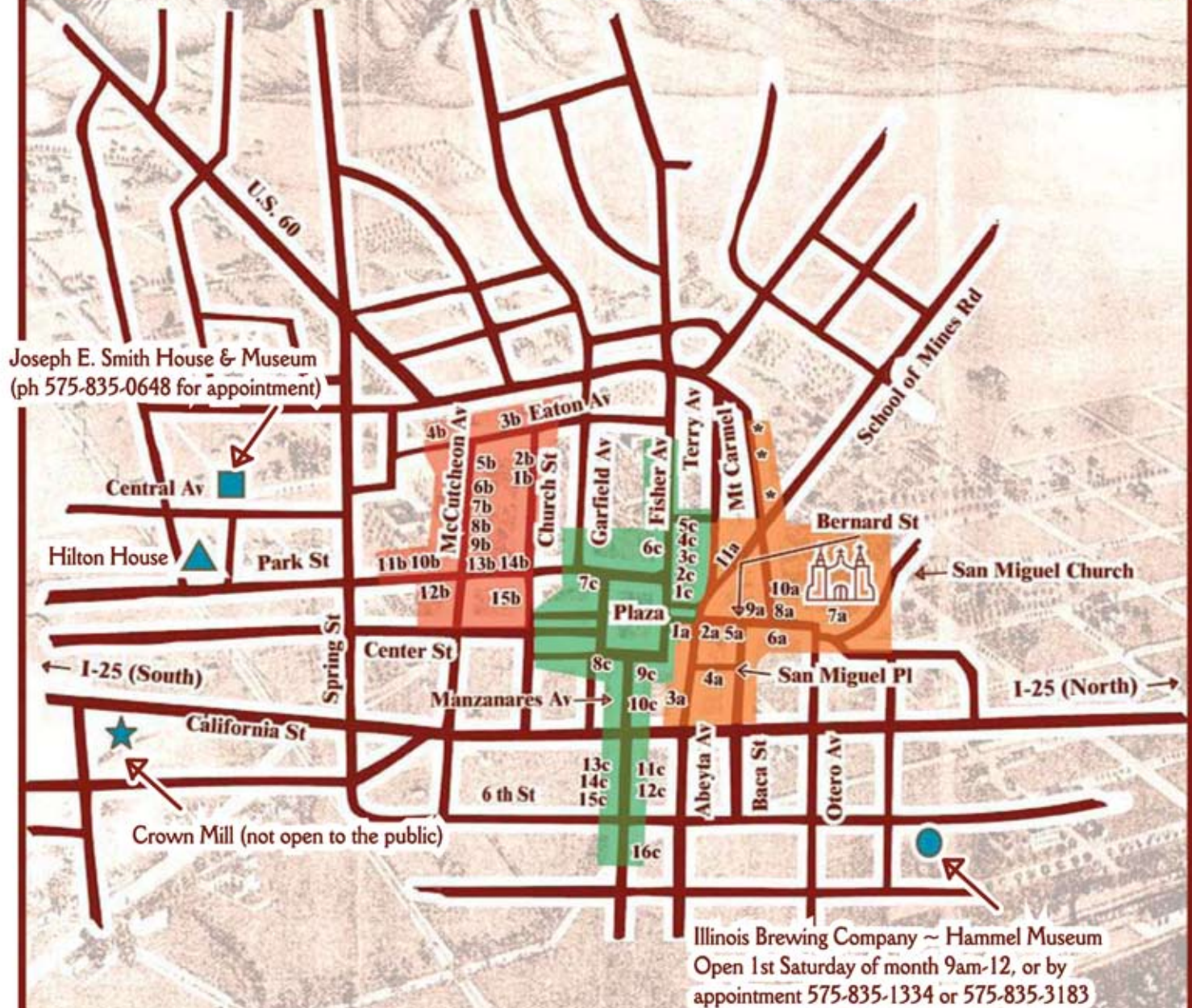
The museum has been named in honor of the Hammel family. It is open on the first Saturday morning of every month and for the yearly Oktoberfest. Visitors may view the different rooms used for the operation of the business & see much of the old equipment, plus other eclectic collections. *Special tour times available, call 575-835-1334 or 835-3183.*



San Miguel Church District (* Additional places of interest in San Miguel Church District)

Kittrel Park (Plaza) ~ Manzanares District

Church ~ McCutcheon District



City of Socorro Historic Walking Tour Map



Resources:

J. E. Smith Historical Photo Collection (used by permission)
 Irene J. Smith-Keen family photos
 Past Socorro County Guidebooks & Walking Tours
 "Socorro, A Historic Survey," John P. Conron
 "The Territorial History of Socorro, New Mexico," Bruce Ashcroft
 Garcia Opera House:
www.socorrobanking.com/garciaoperahouse
 Hammel Museum:
www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nmschs/hammel
 San Miguel Church History:
www.sdc.org/~smiguel/index.php
 "The Leading Facts of New Mexico History," Chap. VI, Vol. IV, Ralph Emerson Twitchell, Esq.
 Socorro citizens
 design, notes, & layout: A.L. & J. Miler 2009



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City of Socorro Tourism
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